

NETHERLANDS

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NETHERLANDS - INLAND WATERWAYSA. POLICIES (See C-6 for Dutch attitude on Rhine Commission)

1. The most urgent objective of Netherlands inland waterway policy is the reestablishment of the country's traditional position as gateway to the industrially important Rhineland. Possessing excellent harbors and lying across all channels of the lower Rhine, the Netherlands controlled, prior to the war, a substantial share of all traffic on the Rhine in both directions. This included loading and discharging of ships at deep water, as well as warehousing of transit goods, and a certain amount of processing. With the collapse of Germany and the control by occupational forces of international shipments, this activity was drastically curtailed. The effect on the Dutch economy was serious. The complete reestablishment of the Netherlands position will require a resumption of normal trade movements throughout Western Germany, as well as the concurrence of the occupational authorities, who are still using the ports of Hamburg and Bremen for large quantities of goods destined for Western Germany.

Because of the indispensability of the Netherlands inland waterway system as a carrier of freight, and the vast investments of the state in its physical improvement, the government has traditionally favored inland water transport over other media. Since the rise of the railroads, however, and the advent of modern highway transport, state policy has tended toward a balance between the various media. Policies regarding operation of the waterways are determined entirely by the state as a part of the over-all control, despite the fact that the water carriers (i.e., barges and motor-driven vessels) are largely privately owned.

2. Policies concerning water transport are normally determined by the Bureau of Waterways, under the authority of the Ministry of Transport. At the present time, however, a Director General of Transport (superimposed upon the transportation administration agencies of the country during the war) coordinates reconstruction measures and policies.
3. Inland waterway transport policies, while originally based to a considerable degree upon strategic and military considerations, today primarily reflect the economic needs of the country. (The waterway system of the Netherlands was developed originally not for transport alone, but as a safeguard against flooding; more recent construction also has been designed for drainage purposes.)
4. Inland waterway transport is not subsidized beyond the indirect aid given by the state in maintenance and administrative services incidental to operation of the waterways. All inland waterways are entirely state owned.
5. State policy concerning inland waterways has been greatly influenced by vested interests, economic and geographic conditions. Political conditions have had relatively little influence upon inland waterway policy, except where such waterways traverse national boundaries.

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NETHERLANDS - INLAND WATERWAYS (B-1)B. ORGANIZATION

1. The Bureau of waterways in the Ministry of Transport has complete responsibility for operation of Netherlands waterways. Other Ministries must coordinate their plans and policies, as they affect waterways, in accordance with the over-all policy of the Ministry of Transport. A Rate Commission establishes rates for inland water carriers as well as for all other forms of transportation.
2. The Bureau of Waterways is composed of several offices, each dealing with specific problems of waterway transport. Functions relating to railway barges and those relating to ordinary types of carriers are handled by separate subdivisions in the Bureau. Waterway management is decentralized, and the provincial authorities have considerable responsibility regarding maintenance of ways and other works, subject to the over-all control of the Ministry.
3. There is no direct relation between the Bureau of Waterways and the other transport agencies within the Ministry. The activities of the Bureau, however, are subject to coordination with other transport policies of the Ministry. There is no administrative relationship between inland waterways, ocean shipping and civil aviation, other than that occasioned by the interests of inland and coastal carriers with respect to usage of certain common transport facilities.
4. For a number of years there has been relatively little change in the organization of the agencies directly responsible for waterways, although there have been changes shifting waterway administration from one Ministry to another, as from the Ministry of Public Works to the present Ministry of Transport. Such changes have been nominal rather than functional. The organization of new agencies does not appear to be under consideration. The agencies dealing with waterways in the Netherlands are believed to be operating as efficiently as possible under the present limitations imposed by war damage. The public, however, is critical of the waterway agencies, due to administrative delays and government regulations which affect operations.

C. ADMINISTRATION

1. Plans for establishment of new waterways or improvement and extension of existing waterways must be approved by the Ministry of Transport. In view of the state's financial responsibility, approvals are subject to budgetary limitations.
2. Shipping rates must be submitted to a Rate Commission which is responsible for the adjustment of rates for all forms of transport. Waterway rates are notably lower than those for other forms of transport. This is a policy developed by the state in order to insure that bulky low-value commodities will be handled by the slower moving water carriers rather than by the limited facilities of the rail systems and highway carriers. It should be noted that present legislation regard-

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ing water carrier rates is comparatively new, dating from 1933. Prior to this, waterway traffic rates were unregulated, and carriers operated in a completely free system of competition.

3. State policy does not permit any competition between media of transport which would eventually weaken the over-all position of any one of them. Rail transport has been a potential threat to the water carriers for a hundred years. The inland water carriers, at first, fought the development of rails vigorously, but in the latter part of the 19th century, it became evident that railroads and waterways, despite their inherent competitive positions, supplemented each other to the ultimate benefit of the state economy. In the years immediately following World War I, road transport became increasingly important and state policy was of necessity adjusted to this new situation.
4. Safety regulations with respect to water operations are the responsibility of the Department of Economic Affairs. Such regulations, while definitely prescribed by laws covering safety of equipment and operations, have not been strictly enforced.
5. The state encourages the training of technicians in the field of transport and the schools, state supported as well as private, cover training in all branches of seafaring. In recent years there has been a continuing interest in the study of inland navigation. In 1937, almost 1400 students were undergoing training in navigation. In order to qualify for high technical positions in the inland waterway transport system, it is necessary to meet certain qualifications required by the state. Qualifications are determined by the Ministry of Transport with the advice of various private technical organizations and the Ministry of Education. Technicians in non-operating aspects of waterway transport, such as construction and equipment, also receive technical training at Delft and other institutions.
6. International agreements concerning waterways are important to the Netherlands waterway system, since so much of the traffic moving over the system is international in character. While vessels of Dutch nationals account for the bulk of the traffic in normal times, German, French and Belgian carriers also participate to a considerable degree in traffic over the Netherlands waterways. Waterway policies concerning traffic, equipment, rates and related problems have been the subject of numerous treaties and conferences between the Netherlands and neighboring states. Some of these treaties date back over 100 years, and their administration has become part of the international policies of the state.

The most important current problems affecting Netherlands inland waterways through the activities of international organizations are those connected with the Central Rhine Commission

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(see A-1 for discussion of the Rhine port problem). While the Dutch are reasonably satisfied with the Rhine Commission as presently constituted, there are indications of apprehension in the Netherlands concerning the possibility that the Soviet Union might later obtain participation in control of Rhine traffic. There is a feeling in the Netherlands that if a future Danube Commission is placed under the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE), in which the Soviet Union participates, a precedent would be created which might give the USSR membership in a future Rhine Commission. The Netherlands is also alert to forestall any attempt of the Central Rhine Commission to expand its authority and to obtain jurisdiction over such questions as bridge construction on the Netherlands waterways.